



Summary Report

The Alaska Partnership for Healthy Communities is an initiative to improve collaboration among government agencies and communities through projects that promote integrated services for Alaskans. This initiative is based on a broad umbrella strategy that connects and guides a number of related projects, all designed to integrate health and social service delivery. The vision is for community ownership, improving services, and sustainable structure and funding.

Why create a partnership? People in need of services must wade through a confusing maze of unconnected state agencies and programs. Integration of comprehensive services that address needs in a coordinated and collaborative manner can achieve the best outcomes. Integration enhances the amount and quality of services that can be achieved with existing resources.

Partnership Principles come under the headings of Comprehensive, Community-based, Accessible, Holistic, Person-centered, Accountable, and Culturally Appropriate.

More information on the Alaska Partnership for Health Communities is available on the Department of Health & Social Services website at <http://aphc.alaska.gov>.

On October 25, 2005, one hundred and eighteen people met together for “Partnership Day” in Centennial Hall, Juneau, Alaska. Partnership Day was structured to bring together managers from the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services and members of diverse human services organizations to enhance services and promote integration across programs and organizations.

The event goals were to: “Enhance the leadership and management skills of people who are involved in integrating human services at all levels: person-centered, services and practices, programs and administration, community systems and statewide systems. Foster collaboration and communication. Discover what we already know from our experiences and to surface suggestions, solutions and ideas that can help individuals involved in the process of integration.”

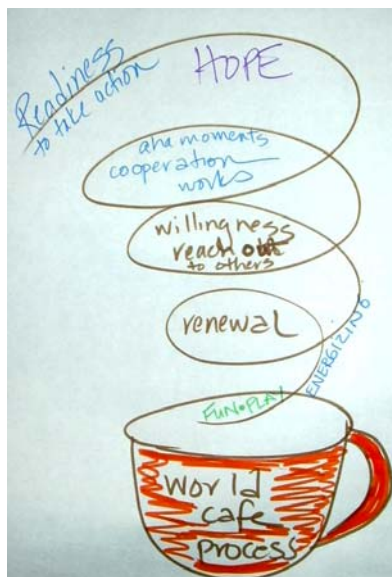
The Partnership Day Program included two presentations: one at the beginning of the day from Ken Diebert, Administrator, Family and Community Services, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, and one at the end of the day from Steve Johnson, Executive Director of All Faiths Receiving Home, an Albuquerque, New Mexico non-profit service provider.

Mr. Diebert and Mr. Johnson described the experiences and lessons, both learned and ongoing, during the process of changing their social services systems. The Idaho program is morphing from a traditional state government model to an integrated system because, as Mr. Diebert said, “Clients and families are suffering because of our lack of integration.” The New Mexico program is a top down-bottom up reorganization of the entire system initiated by Governor Bill Richardson. Both presentations have valuable information and insights and are available on the Partnership Day website (<http://aphc.alaska.gov/conf/resources.html>).

The time in between the two formal presentations was spent on building a community of partners through a process called The World Café, facilitated by Juneau-based consultant Barbara Belknap of B.J. Belknap & Associates.

The Process –

The World Café, or Conversation Café, is a type of “open process” gathering. World Café is a hosted conversation in an actual café or café-type setting around a question that matters. Participants talk about a topic or question while writing, drawing and doodling on paper tablecloths with colored markers. It can be used with a small group or by thousands of people. (Easy to follow directions on how to hold a conversation café are available at www.worldcafe.org and www.conversationcafe.org.)



In a conversation café, the facilitator guides participants through the process. However, it is the people themselves, by talking with each other around a table with a cup of coffee or tea close at hand, who come up with their own answers. As they say on the conversationcafe.org website, “When you put strangers, caffeine and ideas in the same room, brilliant things can happen.”

The setting is important to the process. For the Partnership Day Café, the organizing committee placed flowers and markers in World Café mugs. These centerpieces were in the middle of round black and white checkered mini-tablecloths. Tables for eight were draped in layers of large sheets of butcher paper. These were the tablecloths and the blank slates for the day.

At a World Café event, each table has a Host, who gently insures that everyone adheres to the agreements: acceptance, open-mindedness, curiosity, discovery, sincerity and brevity. The Host also acts as the historian by staying at the table while the others, the Travelers, move on to a new table. When the new Travelers sit down, the Host brings them up to speed on what the previous group said about the question by interpreting the drawings and writings on the tablecloths.

Depending on the size of the gathering, ideas generated by the question can be collected from the tablecloths or on sticky notes. The tablecloths and sticky notes are put up on the walls.

Participants then take a Gallery Walk, where they look at all the tablecloths and sticky notes. At some larger café events, a graphic artist does a “graphic recording” to illustrate in pictures and words the vision that comes out of the process. On October 25, Darcy Richards, a colleague of the facilitator, performed that service.



In this report, the graphics were created by the participants and taken from the tablecloths, sticky notes and the graphic recording done by Darcy Richards.

The illustrations will give the reader a fuller understanding of the process and a feel for the day. The Deputy Commissioner’s summary on page 13 conveys what people had to say to the whole group.



This report on Partnership Day will relay the ideas and thoughts expressed by the 118 people who met each other, many for the first time, in Centennial Hall. We hope that those of you who were not present will use the work done by the participants as a starting point for discussions in your own offices and agencies. Seek out someone who was there and start the conversation.



The Question –

The critical component to a successful World Café is a good question. *The World Café* by Juanita Brown with David Isaacs provides the following guidelines and thoughts on choosing the right question:

- It is simple and clear
- It is thought-provoking
- It generates energy
- It focuses inquiry
- It surfaces assumptions
- It opens new possibilities

Ask yourself, “What question, if answered, could make the biggest difference to the future of the situation we’re exploring here?” The questions have to be open and broad enough to be meaningful to the group’s real life situation.

The Evolution of the Partnership Day Question –

The organizing committee met several weeks before Partnership Day to come up with a question that would bring together people from the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services and diverse human services organizations to enhance services and promote integration across programs and organizations.

Here’s how it evolved:

“If my family needed help from DHSS, how would I expect to be treated and what kind of plan, or coordinated effort, would work for me?”

“Well, sometimes plans are self-defeating.”

“What would a healthy integrated system across agencies look and feel like?”

“Yes, but we have different clients.”

“Who is the customer?”

“It’s the agencies who get the grants.”

“The partners aren’t talking to each other. They all need to help the family.”

“This is called Partnership Day. What are our partnerships?”

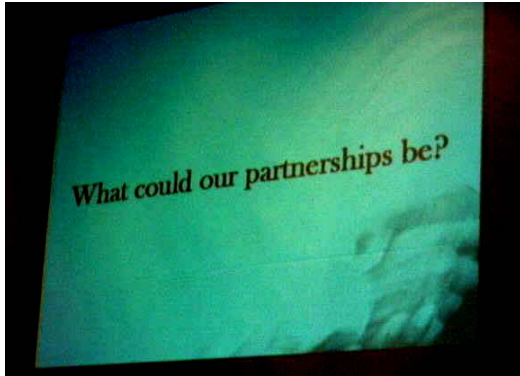
“What do healthy partnerships look and feel like?”

“What are the possibilities for partnerships?”

and, finally...

What could our partnerships be?

When the question was unveiled, the participants were sitting at tables with people who were not their co-workers. They were asked to check in (introduce themselves), give their first impression of the question, then engage in a 40-minute conversation around “What could our partnerships



be?” Everyone was encouraged to use the markers to express themselves. The facilitator asked that people listen for commonalities - common themes and threads - as they moved from table to table.

At the end of Round One, they moved to a new table with all new people to repeat the process. For Round Two, they were asked to share their first conversations and continue to move deeper into the possibilities presented by the question.

After the two rounds, they returned to their Round One table to “harvest the nuggets” and write them down on the sticky notes.

The facilitator moved around the room asking people to share their emotions about the experience, how it felt to have these conversations.



While that went on, the table hosts put the sticky notes



on brightly colored posterboard. During lunch, the tablecloths were put up on every available piece of wall space. After lunch, people slowly circled the room during the Gallery Walk, reading the sticky note bulletin boards and interpreting the tablecloths.

The afternoon began with an hour of “whole group discussion.”

Steve Johnson gave his presentation, then there was an hour of Q&A. The conversation

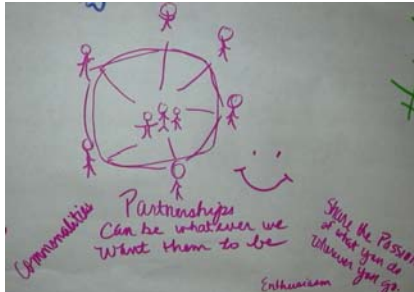


continued at the Silverbow Inn, where everyone got a chance to talk to the speakers and each other.



The Collective Wisdom around “What could our partnerships be?”

Partnership/Collaboration/Cooperation -



Just do it.

It's easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission.

Invite ourselves to existing partnerships.

Develop partnerships from pre-birth to death.

Our partnerships can be everyone we can think of and anyone we have never thought of.

Children and families are department clients,

not just DPA, DJJ or OCS.

Bring in other big partners from other departments: Labor, Corrections, Public Safety, Department of Environmental Conservation, Education.

Leadership obligation to commit and support change – a mandate from the Commissioner.

Agree on common goal – identify who does what – broaden partnership if needed.

We all have commonalities working with individuals and families. What if the social service model focused on employment as a means to encourage self-reliance, to increase confidence for the individuals involved, and to assist as needed to better improve service delivery. So look to collocate staff –

Non-profit Advisory Council CBO to support upfront unified planning

Need follow-up, acknowledgement of baby steps, permission to learn from mistakes and regroup.

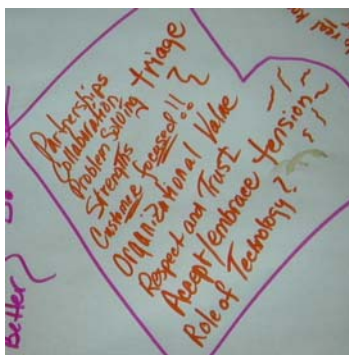
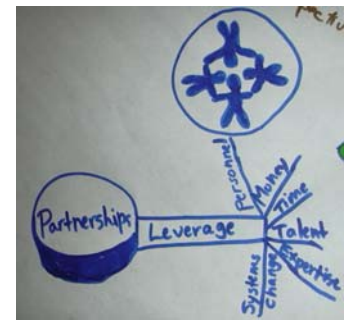
Need to expand role of agencies to serve the needs of the family.

It is about family – not about our structure.

Prevention: Collaborative effort at the front end of the service continuum.

Collaborative prevention is the least restrictive and most appropriate.

Partnerships could be inclusive not only when families are clients but through prevention efforts.



Build on existing meetings.

Collaborate around quality assurance and quality improvements.

We as state providers of services should require collaboration with community partners funded by the state.

Mini-partnerships: Make little partners all over the place to make one big partnership.

Collaborate within the Job Center - with other units in Public Assistance, with



Dept. of Labor.

We need someone to help us through this process.

We need some small successes.

Increase realistic collaboration on top level – good concept, but talk about the details and the reality.

Identify existing partnerships and provide recognition and use them as examples.

What our partnerships could be: a relationship similar to marriage, accept differences in one another, practice give and take.

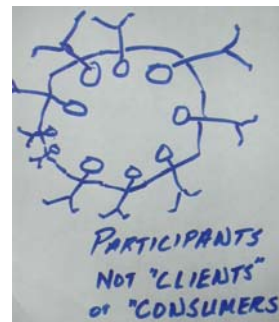
Accept “less than perfect” in our partners.

Commonality – Search for it!

All points of entry considered equal.

Next step: department-wide “Regional Managers,” mid-level managers, conduct brainstorming around partnership.

A great opportunity for great experiences.

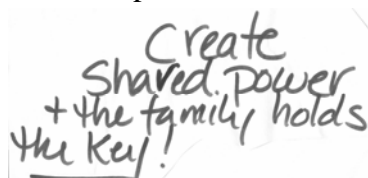


Families and Clients/Participants -

If you were a person, family, or teen in need, could you navigate the current system?

Participant need is our common tie.

“It’s a Department Kid – not a Division Kid.”



Families are equal partners.

Treat clients as partners and have the client treat you as a partner.

Make sure participants are true partners and let them participate.

Transition families between programs.

Department looks at the whole family.

Families help define their own resources, as well as their needs.

Model the behavior – ask the grantees to look at the whole family.

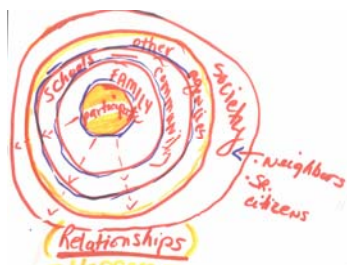
Another reason to collaborate: How do we work together to prevent a family’s slide into deeper need?

Instead of a menu of services, ask, “What do you need?”

Ensure that the family is a true/active participant in their case plan.

One plan for participants rather than multiple plans from each agency.

Improve the participant’s experience of going through the process.



Define family to be inclusive of extended family or others who impact the family situation (neighbors, church, friends, others).

Marginalization – families, foster parents, adoptive parents not at the table 100%. They all have expertise.

Share data – look at status of kids and families across the Department.

Focus services that help families stay together, not just refer them elsewhere

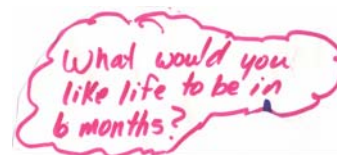
and go back to your own program.

Look to the needs of all, not just those with the loudest voice.

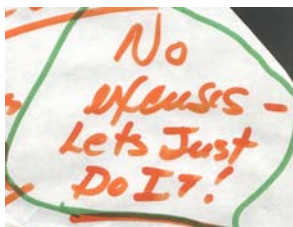
How can we work together/collaborate to prevent people from becoming members of the 2% club?

Coordinate case plans for teens leaving the system.

Participant needs to understand what is going on – what is happening to them.



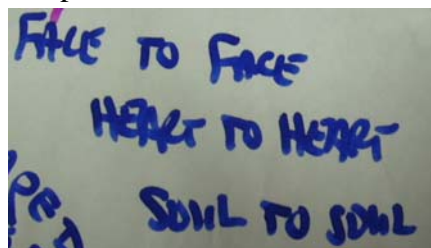
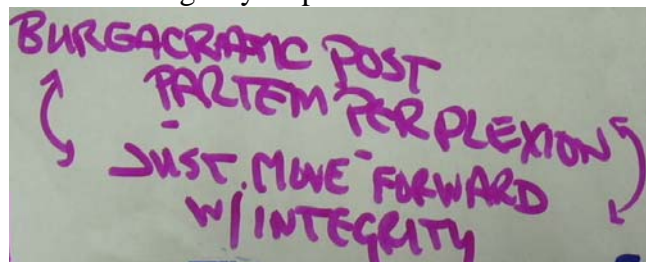
The Culture -



Trust: How do we trust *government* agencies? How do government agencies trust others who have been providing services for a long time? We need to have a “referee” for some of the interagency disputes. Establish the culture through continued commitment to the process.

When we partner with other organizations, what behaviors build trust? Share development, pay on time, share accountability. (This is not exemplified at present in the way we use contracts and grants.)

Keep in mind the office culture.



Ask!!! How does our work contribute to your work? = Our work.

Work within our own office first to stop turf battles.

COMMUNICATE!!!! Departments with common goals for the families, but working towards those goals separately.

Come together, meet with families, develop teams.

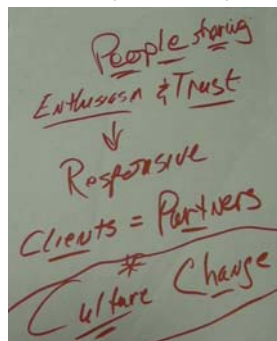
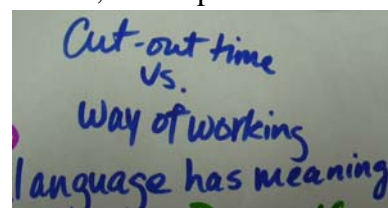
Move away from the “state” doing to the “community” doing what needs to be done.

Honest. Real. Open Agenda (vs. hidden agenda).

Share!

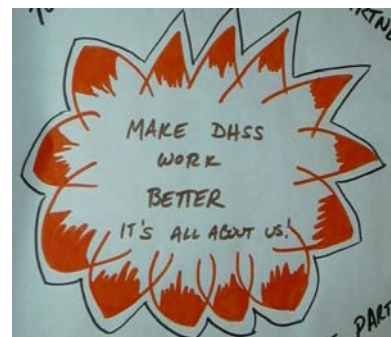
Share information versus reinventing the wheel.

Educate, involve, or change management.



Share control responsibility.
Seek outside critique of ideas.
Accept and embrace the tension and ambiguity.
How can my division help your division?
Releasing power at all levels.
Be responsive to one another.
Celebrate changes that avoid redundancy.
Change the current culture.
Respect that we are different, but all have a role.
Immersion in the change we all cheerlead.

Definitions: competence, compassion, blame is not okay, rules/regulations, change definitions.



The Personal -

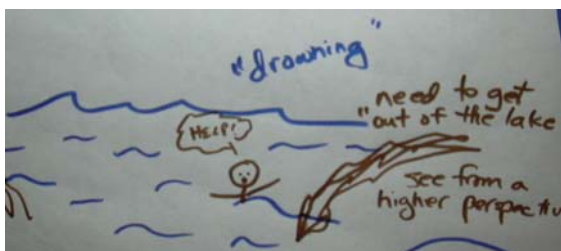
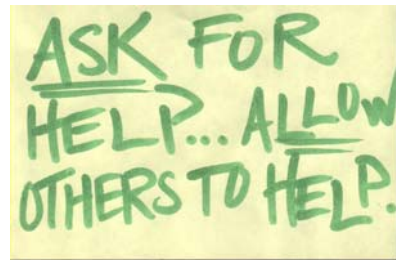
Have clear expectations of ourselves and others.

HiTech does not replace human touch.

Staying power – how to keep the motivation, to keep it going.

Change is a hard thing.

Need ongoing support, determination.



Leeway: Make it okay to make mistakes.

Reassurance: (Share) experiences knowing that people are being as creative as possible to help others.

Big Plates – How big are the plates people carry? Keep adding responsibilities, but don't take anything off.

Change the wording in Performance Evaluations to reflect the culture change.

It's easy to get along when we all agree.

I don't need permission to collaborate and be a stronger partner.

Acknowledge the baggage you bring to the partnership.

Painful – Experiences of knowing the issues but not being able to help.

Personal – Society - Agency – de-personalized with data, computers, email, voicemail. We need to get personal with one another. Pick up the phone. Meet face to face.

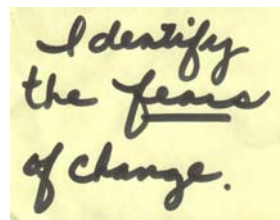
Define and promote our own personal goals to partnership.

Be real (with our warts) NOT fake (what we want to believe we are).

Overcome the need to blame.

We don't have to fix all internal agency issues/fractures before moving forward with integration.

Celebrate successes – Good Job!!!



Nuts and Bolts -

Be bold in unified planning as a reality, not just an exercise. Hold ourselves responsible.

Design and grant local level authority to make decisions.

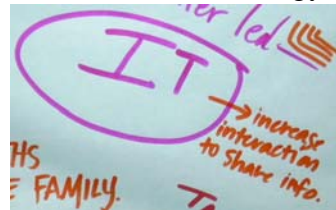
Cross-training of Gatekeepers: Get all receptionists from agencies into one room to know about services, websites, etc., so they can share information.

Partnership means nothing if it is not brought to line staff completely.



Line staff need to know where to start.
All inclusive integrated technology information

Online Rolodex of roles, responsibilities, services and skills – Who does what?
Information Technology (IT) integration and information flow is crucial.



Do a community services inventory.

Community organization as a model for service integration.

Find services for participants – we can't do it by ourselves.

Flexibility of regulations and policies to support families.

Complexity – We get so complex. We need to find somebody to help figure out how to get through what we have. New agencies born to

figure out what we have.

Make it okay for people to partner even if it's not their open case.

Allow workers to participate when they don't have a formal referral.

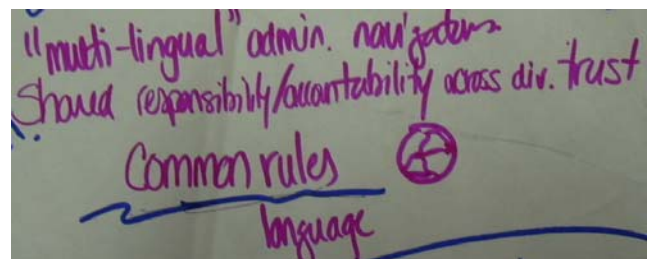
Be mindful of over-burdening line staff. Keep in mind the time it really takes to manage cases.

What do we have in common? Most families need employment to be self-sufficient.

Make it okay for everyone to attend discussions (i.e., if a division has hx-closed case, they can still attend and offer).

A “211” System 24/7 statewide.

The “Euro” Idea – one set of rules. A free pass at Juvenile Justice means a free pass at Children’s Services. One criteria for vendors. One criteria for services. Find common elements to create one.



Team-based continuity of service...not in and out of each program - full of cliffs and walls.

Share information across divisions about initiatives, programs, projects so everyone knows what's available.

Division of Juvenile Justice and Office of Children's Services both have foster homes -find ways to work "not who licenses."

Formalized cross-fertilization across divisions at all levels.

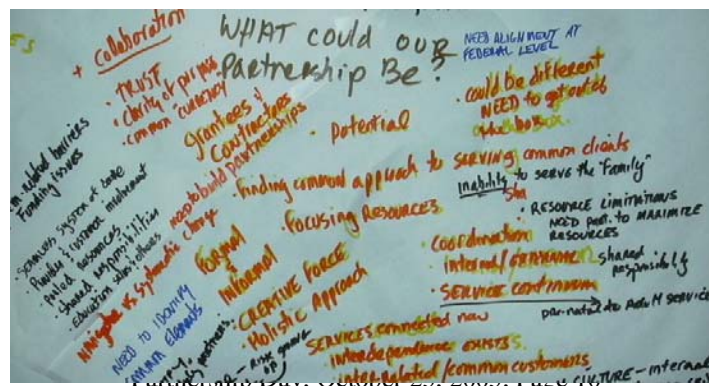
Liaison or ombudsman in each division for working with shared customers – a Personal Navigator.

Navigators can provide feedback for systemic change.

Use Navigation Teams to teach us about where there is duplication.

Family-friendly Navigator who has budget authority and can identify what family needs department-wide.

Use navigation system to help us get so organized that we don't need them.



Resources -

Shared Vision – Shared Money – Shared Staff.

Staying power: Develop resources to keep partnership development a priority.

Consolidate funding streams within the department to collaborate in ways to maximize the money and our strengths.

Remove funding barriers.

What's best for the family will determine the funding.

Exploit/leverage the flexibility in funding, i.e., Medicaid, and resources to serve common customers.

Medicaid can fund prevention.

Think broadly about resources.
It's not always about money



Resource Identification: Identify resources each partner can bring to the table.

Look at all potential resources, not just well funded "official" or agency resources.

A lot of resources are available inside the department.

Closed feelings – allowing people to be protective of territory; resources stay within division.

Share grant plans early to see if others not thought of are

interested in partnership.

Collaborate for grants.

Need to plan within existing resources and ensure movement.

Partners are freely vocal about their needs to allow other partners to share resources and services and knowledge.

Time is too limited and we have limited resources. Real collaboration will be a benefit/cost savings.



Barriers -

Budgets and grants, as well as Medicaid = forces against collaboration.

Recognize organization barriers and differences in climate, then work through it.

We all struggle to stay proficient in our ever-changing MIS (Management Information System technology), and our MIS's don't fit between agencies.

STRENGTHS

WE CAN DO THIS NOW.
WE DON'T NEED PERMISSION
WE NEED UPPER MGMT. TO
REMOVE BARRIERS WE DEFINE
IN OUR EFFORTS AT THE
COMMUNITY LEVEL.

How Do we
open the Door
to release the
barriers.

Break down barriers: turf, confidentiality, educate each other.

No one wants to take the risk. We can't handle the image unless we are perfect.

Lack of ownership. Relationship-based structure is a barrier.

Hidden agendas. "I'm with the government. I'm here to help."

Sustainability -

Does the change in leadership/administration mean the demise/change of partnership?

Positive outcomes with partners and shareholders will transcend administrations.

Clearly define the purpose, evaluate and identify outcomes of the partnership for sustainability.

*How do you deal w/
changing Administration?*

*Partnership
Enthusiasm needs to be
carried by all ^{top} middle
throughout*

Inclusion -

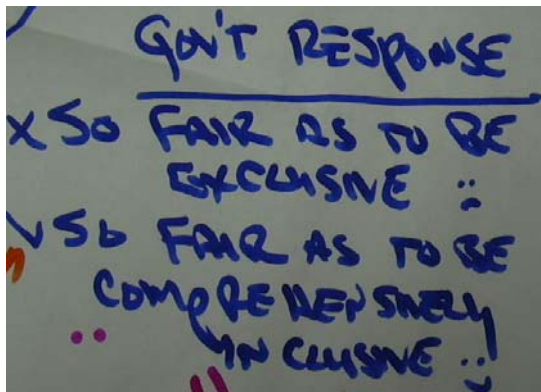
*Where are the
tribal entities?*

Who isn't at the table? Visualize them. What would they add to the discussion?

Tribal and Native corporations are not represented here. Tribal partners. They are key to planning. They aren't present in this session.

Get the right people in the conversation – all stakeholders need to be in the process and the solutions.





Summing up –

The closing remarks of Deputy Commissioner Bill Hogan:

As requested, I listened for trends and commonalities. The ones I noted were a desire for healthy families and communities, a desire for meaningful jobs, a way to contribute to one's community, state and society, and serving the people as a system.

Here is what I heard today:

I heard you are feeling overwhelmed.
I heard you need to step back and reflect.
I heard that change is difficult – it needs to be done respectfully.
I heard this requires a new perspective on the job.
I heard this requires a willingness to work together.
I heard that you will try to change.
I heard that you are hopeful and encouraged.
I heard that you need assistance from above “the Department” or “higher.”
I heard that today is a foundation to move forward.
I heard that this will require barrier busting.
I heard that we can change statutes, regulations, etc., to make this work.
I heard that we need to be cheerleaders.
I heard that you learned something you can use.
I heard enthusiasm.
I heard about community partnering rather than just the state.
I heard this will require flexibility regarding grants, regulations, etc.
I heard that there is fear of change and we must get rid of that fear.
I heard a call for a “can do” attitude.
I heard that we need to listen.
I heard that there must be equality for everyone in the partnership – resources, time, etc.
I heard about sharing resources.
I heard that this must be participant/family centered.
I heard there must be information sharing.
I heard that we must be “culturally centered.”
I heard that we need to be “high touch” as well as high tech.

I heard that we need to promote relationships.

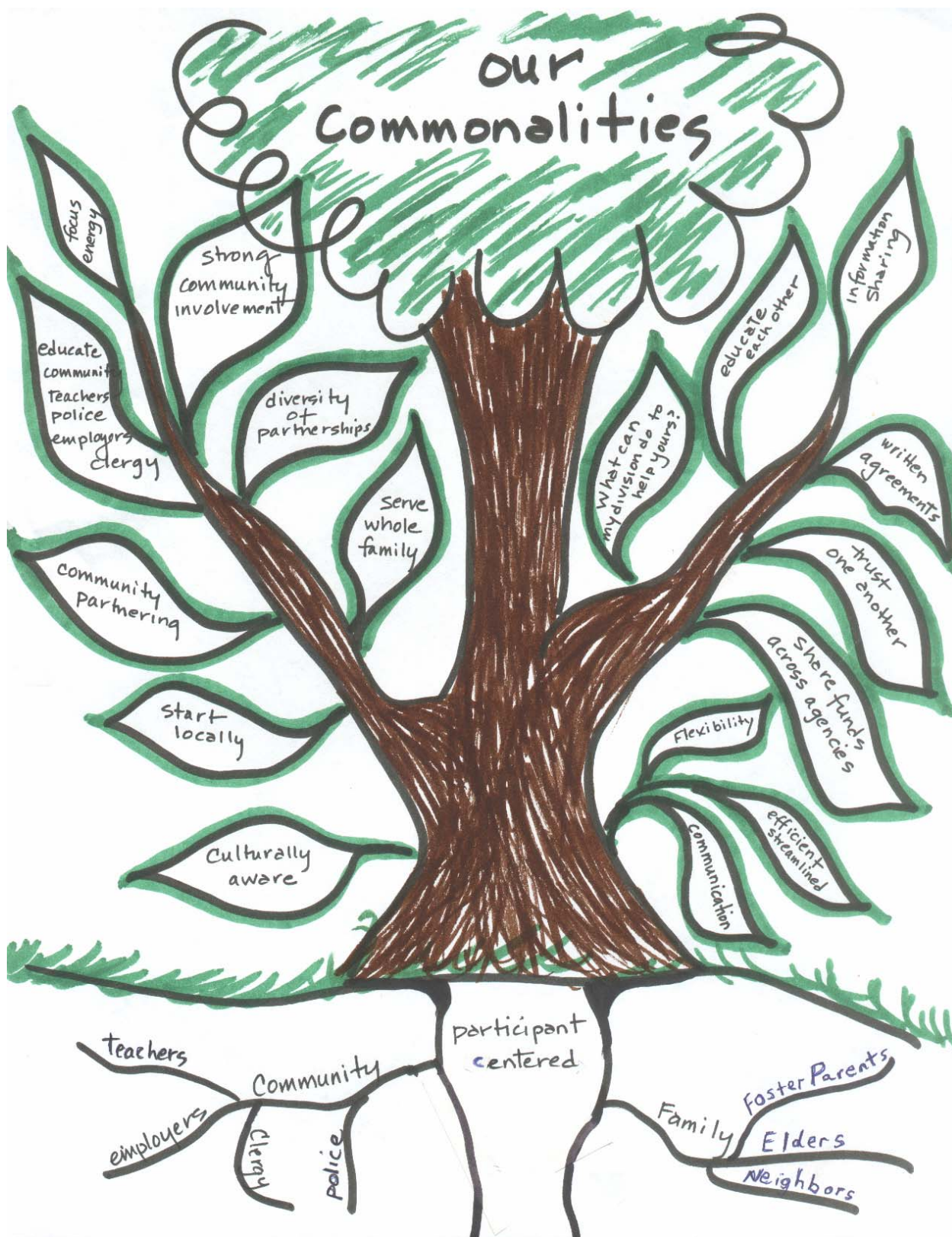
I heard that we need a common commitment.

I heard we need to be partnering with “uncommon” partners.

I heard we need to focus on outcomes.

We need to set the intention to change the way we do business and I am doing this. We will make the commitment. You are not alone. There is alignment. There is a common focus and a common purpose. This is an opportunity. Anyone who wants to create change is a leader.

What’s next? E-mail me direct with your thoughts about the next step.
(william_hogan@health.state.ak.us)





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Building community through creative partnerships.



The graphic recording of the group discussion – Partnership Day, Oct. 25, 2005

By Darcy Richards of Inner Balance

